

*REMARKS/ARGUMENTS*

The amendments set out above and the following remarks are responsive to the points raised by the Office Action dated March 20, 2007. In view of the amendments set out above and the following remarks, reconsideration is respectfully requested.

*Information Disclosure Statement*

An Information Disclosure Statement, including a PTO-1449 Form, is submitted herewith. It is respectfully requested that the Examiner place his initials in the appropriate area of the Form, thereby indicating his consideration of the documents, and return the initialed Form to the Applicants.

The Office Action noted that the Applicants had not provided a translation or a concise explanation of the relevance of DE 1792446. Under MPEP § 609 (III), an English-language version of the search report or action by a foreign patent office in a counterpart foreign application indicating the degree of relevance found by the foreign Office may be submitted in lieu of a concise explanation of the relevance. A copy of the PCT search report indicating the degree of relevance of DE 1792446 found by International Bureau was submitted with the IDS filed on March 8, 2007, thereby satisfying the requirements of 37 CFR § 1.98.

Nevertheless, the Applicants have obtained and submit herewith an English translation of DE 1792446, as well as English translations of the other German references cited in the IDS and in the PCT search report.

*The Pending Claims*

Claims 1-2 and 4-13 are cancelled, and claims 25-37 are added, to describe the invention more clearly. Claims 3 and 14-37 are currently pending.

*Allowable Subject Matter*

The Applicants are pleased to note that claims 3, 14-17, and 19-24 are allowed.

*Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112*

Claims 12 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. Claim 12 has been cancelled, thus obviating the rejection of claim 12, and claim 18 has been amended to describe the invention more clearly. It is respectfully submitted that with these amendments to the claims, the rejection under § 112 has now been overcome and should be withdrawn.

*Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102, 103*

Claims 2, 8-10, and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as anticipated by DE 1792446 (hereinafter, "DE '446").

Claims 2, 8-10, and 13 were rejected under § 102 as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,716,559 to Larsen et al. (hereinafter, "Larsen").

Claims 11 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as unpatentable over DE '446 or Larsen.


Each of these rejections is separately and respectfully traversed. However, in order to expedite matters and to allow the application to pass to issuance quickly, claims 2 and 8-13 have been cancelled, thus obviating all of the outstanding anticipation and obviousness rejections. Since all of the outstanding rejections have been obviated, it is believed that this amendment places all of the pending claims in condition for allowance.

Since independent claim 3 has been indicated to be allowed, the new dependent claims are also allowable because they depend directly or ultimately from allowed independent claim 3.

*Conclusion*

Applicants respectfully submit that the patent application is in condition for allowance. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of the subject application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Stephanie M. Lawley, Reg. No. 55362  
LEYDIG, VOIT & MAYER  
700 Thirteenth Street, N.W., Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20005-3960  
(202) 737-6770 (telephone)  
(202) 737-6776 (facsimile)

Date: 

SML/tdh